



What's on the Minds of BC's HR Leaders?

By Rock Lefebvre

At the risk of sounding simplistic, the deployment of human capital and corresponding productivity remains a key priority across sectors and geographic boundaries. We live in a substantively changing world where demographic shifts, technological advancements, and escalating globalization are redefining market needs and workplace apprehensions.

The province of British Columbia is not immune to these pressures; nor is it purely unique in its bid for talent and workforce stability. Encouragingly, the provincial government has advanced a number of important strategies which individually, and collectively, serve to address and afford relief to some anticipated labour force supply and demand challenges. For example, the “Skills for Growth Strategy” focuses on three priority areas aimed at building BC’s sustainability. Based on a motivation to drive economic and social prosperity—all the while supporting the tenet that BC’s highly-skilled and globally-competitive workforce will drive innovation and economic growth across the province—these priorities include:

- increasing the skill level and labour market success of British Columbians;
- attracting workers and entrepreneurs; and,
- improving workplace productivity.

All the while, the province supports new investment in labour market programs and services, encourages labour mobility, provides financial assistance to organizations to nurture labour force adjustments and human resources planning, navigates an inclusive youth employment strategy, and has commissioned comprehensive reviews intent on better aligning educational pursuits with labour market demands. These are to name a few government initiatives from amongst a myriad of public programs and projects aimed at bolstering labour market prospects and redressing projected labour capital limitations.

Curious to see how we are doing, HRMA partnered with Canada’s Public Policy Forum, with contributions from Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and the University of Northern British Columbia, in May 2015 to gauge the condition of BC’s human capital stock. For a complete account of the project, its findings, and some recommendations, please reference the whitepaper [**Ahead of the Talent Curve: Ensuring BC's Competitive Edge**](#).

Bringing together human resources management practitioners and leaders for the purpose of cultivating diverse perspectives, the exercise emphasizes that today's human resources management professionals must react to:

- an increasing competition for talent;
- intergenerational equity and cohort integration in the workplace;
- skills gaps, underemployment, and talent mismatches; and,
- rapidly changing economic and technological environments.

As human resources professionals wrestle with these important issues, the broader consortium has affirmed that business and policy leaders seek to benefit from increased economic diversification, emerging development prospects, and trade growth. Notwithstanding BC's promising economic outlook, our panels of experts confirm that the province is well served to address labour shortages, skills gaps, and underutilization of talent to fully prepare for, and take advantage of, new growth opportunities.

As part of the strategy to get there, organizations are prioritizing workforce planning, employee engagement and culture, leadership development, succession planning, and continuous innovation — areas that keep some up at night and areas where HR professionals, as trusted business advisors, can deliver.

The HR function manages a key link to company success through the effective integration of people and performance. Attracting and retaining the right talent is key, as too is the need to manage and celebrate the talent, motivations and accomplishments of our workforces. Long-term organizational and social success depends on it.

For a more comprehensive discussion, please scan the [**Ahead of the Talent Curve: Ensuring BC's Competitive Edge**](#) whitepaper available free of charge. While functioning as a representative policy direction for the province, the paper informs on current market trends and highlights the opportunity before human resources management professionals to strategically advance the interests of clients, employers, and the more expansive BC economy.